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Representative Mel Ponder Honored with 2018 Defender of Home Rule Award

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TALLAHASSEE – The Florida League of Cities honored Representative Mel Ponder with a 2018 Defender of Home Rule Award for his tireless efforts to defend and protect the principles of municipal Home Rule during the 2018 legislative session.

“It is such an honor to be recognized by the Florida League of Cities with this award,” said Rep. Ponder. “As a former mayor, I put great value on Home Rule. I personally believe that every city and community has significance, and honoring that heritage is very important to me.”

This prestigious award was presented to Rep. Ponder at the League’s 92nd Annual Conference in Hollywood on Saturday. Recipients of the Defender of Home Rule Award are legislators who consistently voted and advocated on behalf of the League and its members.

“As a former city mayor, Mel Ponder fully understands ‘one size does not fit all’ when it comes to legislation affecting our cities,” said Fort Walton Beach Mayor Dick Rynearson. “He believes each city has unique needs, wants and priorities that are best addressed at the local level. Mel is truly a Home Rule Hero!”

Rep. Ponder served on the Destin City Council from 2002-06 and was elected mayor of the City of Destin in 2014. He held the position of Destin’s mayor until 2016, when he was elected to represent District 4 in the Florida House of Representatives.

In addition to his career in public service, Rep. Ponder is also the founder and president of Business Empowered, a marketplace ministry headquartered in Destin with a mission to equip, encourage and empower individuals in their calling. He previously served as the director of regional marketing programs for the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association and, prior to that, was the executive director of Coastal Vision 3000/THE Beach in Destin.

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Founded in 1922, the Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments. Its goals are to promote local self-government and serve the needs of Florida’s cities. Florida’s cities are formed by their citizens and

governed by their citizens. The League is founded on the belief that local self-government is the keystone of American democracy. For more information, visit www.floridaleagueofcities.com.